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State of Connecticut

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Senate Minority Leader Len Fasano

Testimony re: An Act Ensuring the Regional Competitiveness of Connecticut's Liquor Prices
General Law Committee Public Hearing
February 23, 2016

Chairmen Leone and Baram, Ranking Members Witkos and Carter, and members of the General Law Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 14 An Act Ensuring The Regional Competitiveness of Connecticut's Liquor Prices.

Connecticut needs to take steps that reduce burdens and make it easier for job creators to grow and thrive in our state.

Unfortunately, removing minimum bottle pricing would put small business owners at a huge disadvantage compared to large chain stores. Removing this rule would enable larger stores to sell products below cost to attract customers away from the smaller mom and pop stores that cannot afford to sell products for such low prices. These are small businesses in our communities that offer jobs, contribute to community groups, and participate in our local economies. These are people trying to make a living, something they cannot do if big businesses are handed an unfair advantage.

The current minimum pricing laws are designed to promote fairness in the system and give all businesses the opportunity to be successful. Eliminating these laws would put us on a path to large stores putting small stores out of business and killing local competition.

The governor has stated that he wants to reduce prices for customers so they are more likely to buy alcohol in-state. If that is the case, the legislature would have more success by eliminating the sales tax on alcohol to compete with our neighboring states of Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New Hampshire that do not have this tax. Instead the governor's proposal targets the business and profits of our small community owned businesses. I cannot support such a proposal.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Len Fasano
Senate Minority Leader